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White House Watch Jerry's Guys

Sen. Barry Goldwater regaled a group of colleagues and staff assistants in the Senate cloakroom on Monday morning, November 3, with an account of the telephone call from Florida the previous afternoon in which President Ford disclosed that he had fired Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger and CIA Director William E. Colby and intended to replace them with, respectively, Donald Rumsfeld and George Bush. The President also told Goldwater, as he did other influential members of Congress in calls from Florida that Sunday afternoon, about the pending announcements that Nelson Rockefeller had withdrawn from consideration for the 1976 vice presidential nomination and that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had been asked and had agreed to give up his prized status, the basis of his power since 1969, as assistant to the President for national security affairs. It was evident to Goldwater's audience in the Senate cloakroom that he was thoroughly enraged by both the fact and the manner of the abrupt dismissal of Secretary Schlesinger, a moderate liberal who was esteemed by conservative Republicans because he advocated high defense expenditures and believed that Henry Kissinger had caused two Presidents, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, to concede more to the Soviet Union than they should have in their quests for strategic arms agreements and for the broad accommodation that is generally called *détente*. According to one of Goldwater's listeners, he said that he asked the President what qualified Don Rumsfeld to be Secretary of Defense and that the entire reply to the question was: "He was a fighter pilot in the Korean war."

Rumsfeld was a student at Princeton University during the Korean war and a peacetime Navy pilot and flight instructor for two years after his graduation in 1954. At the Monday night press conference that he had called to announce the cabinet changes, the President said in a prepared statement that "Don has served with distinction as a congressman from Illinois, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, director of the Cost of Living Council, and as ambassador to NATO." In answer to a question, he noted that Rumsfeld had "served in the Department of Defense as a naval aviator." In other answers, however, the President made it clear that the backgrounds and qualifications of the officials whom he was dismissing and of their replacements were secondary considerations with him. His primary consideration was that after replacing the inherited heads of the domestic departments with his own choices, he was determined in the 15th month of his presidency to accomplish the same thing in the fields of foreign policy and national security. His answers to this effect were widely disbelieved by reporters and commentators who suspected or were convinced that Mr. Ford was trying to conceal other and more fundamental reasons. There were other reasons, of course. But the relevant portions of his answers seem to me to be both believable and revealing. They and the events they concern show Gerald Ford to be intensely egoistic behind that humble facade of his, capable of an inhuman cruelty stupidly evinced, and desperately anxious to establish and prove himself as a national leader in his own right. Consider the following remarks, quoted in the sequence in which they were made: "I think any President has to have . . . his own team"; "They are my choices"; "I wanted a team that was my team"; "Mr. Bush and Don Rumsfeld are long personal friends of mine"; "These are my guys and the ones that I wanted"; "I wanted my own team"; "The President . . . ought to have the team with him that he wants." At the end of the press conference I asked Mr. Ford why it had taken him 15 months to form his own

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